

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE
GULF OF MEXICO OCS REGION**

NTL No. 2007-G10

Effective Date: April 3, 2007

**NOTICE TO LESSEES AND OPERATORS OF FEDERAL OIL AND GAS LEASES
IN THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF, GULF OF MEXICO OCS REGION**

Exploration Plans and the *Blanco v. Burton* Settlement

This Notice to Lessees and Operators (NTL) is issued pursuant to 30 CFR 250.103. It makes a temporary change to NTL No. 2006-G14, Information Requirements for Exploration Plans and Development Operations Coordination Documents, effective July 12, 2006.

Background

On October 24, 2006, the parties (the State of Louisiana, Minerals Management Service (MMS), and the American Petroleum Institute) reached a settlement agreement in the case *Blanco v. Burton*, Civ. No. 06-3813. As a part of this agreement, any Exploration Plan (EP) submitted by MMS to the State of Louisiana for a lease issued in Lease Sale No. 200 that is subject to consistency review by the State of Louisiana must be accompanied by a draft Environmental Assessment (EA). This requirement remains in effect only until MMS prepares a multisale Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and issues a Record of Decision (ROD). See the MMS Internet website at <http://www.mms.gov/5-year/> for updates on the status of this decision.

Information Requirements for EP's

Pursuant to 30 CFR 250.201(b), the following paragraph (j) is added to the section titled *Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA)* (§§ 250.227 and 250.261) of NTL No. 2006-G14 to implement the aforementioned condition of the *Blanco v. Burton* settlement agreement:

“(j) For EP's only, if you will conduct any activities proposed in the EP on a lease(s) issued in Lease Sale No. 200, and such activities affect the State of Louisiana (see paragraph (a) of the section titled *Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) Information* (§§ 250.226 and 250.260)), include a draft environmental analysis that provides an analytical review of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the EP activities. Per the settlement agreement, also identify the onshore support service and infrastructure that you will use and any onshore support services and infrastructure that you will use that have

been affected by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita. This draft environmental analysis is in lieu of the EIA described in paragraphs (a) through (i) of this section.”

Guidance on Preparing the Draft Environmental Analysis

Since your draft environmental analysis will provide detailed information that MMS may incorporate into its EA, the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region (GOMR) encourages you to contact the MMS GOMR Environmental Assessment Section to arrange a meeting before you submit any EP subject to the requirements of this NTL to discuss potential concerns and any specific data needs regarding your preparation of the environmental analysis.

Address the following when you prepare a draft environmental analysis under this NTL:

- A. Possible Alternatives. Discuss the alternatives to the proposed exploration activities, including alternative sites. Provide an explanation of the reasons those alternatives were not chosen and support the decision to choose the proposed project.
- B. Existing Conditions. Describe the existing conditions in the affected environment. Cite as references and/or include as appendices any documents, studies, or reports you relied upon to describe the existing conditions.
- C. Potential Impacts. Provide a detailed analysis of potential impacts addressing the direct, indirect and, cumulative effects that the proposed exploration activities could have on the identified existing conditions. Include the concise information and data you developed or relied upon to reach conclusions as to potential impacts. Cite as references and/or include as appendices the sources of that information and data.
- D. Mitigation. Describe any mitigation measures you propose using to avoid or reduce impacts and explain the effectiveness of this mitigation in terms of duration and recovery that might be expected relative to the resource.
- E. References and Appendices. Include a list of the references that you cite in the analysis and, as appropriate, attach any documents, studies, or reports or other information and data you relied upon to describe the existing conditions or potential impacts.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 Statement

The information collection referred to in this NTL is intended to provide clarification, description, or interpretation of requirements contained in 30 CFR 250, Subpart B, Plans and Information. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the information collection requirements in this regulation and assigned OMB Control Number 1010-0151. This NTL does not impose additional information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

Contact

Please contact Mr. Dennis Chew by e-mail at dennis.chew@mms.gov or by telephone at (504) 736-2793, or send inquires to the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Office of Leasing and Environment, Environmental Assessment Section (MS 5410), 1201 Elmwood Park Blvd., New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, with any questions regarding this NTL.

[original signed – Michael Prendergast]

For Lars T. Herbst
Acting Regional Director